

## **The Australian Catholic University in the New Millennium**

Vice-Chancellor of the Australian Catholic University (ACU), Professor Peter W. Sheehan, met today with members of the Australian Catholic Bishops' Conference in Sydney. He discussed with them his vision of Australian Catholic University to take it into the new millennium to the year 2020.

"The Church should be proud of Australian Catholic University," said Professor Sheehan. "As part of the unified National System it is an association which demonstrates a unique partnership between Government and Church."

"The way ahead of Australian Catholic University," he said, "was to realise the uniqueness of the Mission of the University by ensuring that it could offer its students value-added education. Staff should not have to be people who label themselves as Catholic, but they should share a commitment to the Mission of the University and feel comfortable with it imparting a sense of sacredness and spirituality of the Catholic Ethos which should infiltrate the educational process and the environment in which both staff and students work. The University also should maintain its present reputation of being a caring institution with a special sense of social responsibility and an individual concern for the moral and ethical implications."

Professor Sheehan also discussed with ACBC the degrees his University was offering in Theology, announced the commitment of the University to consolidate its two Melbourne campuses and to move to Banyo in the future. The planned moves in Victoria and Queensland are an imaginative step forward into the future, a future he hoped would be characterised by development of a distinctive identity where the Church showed ownership of the University while still respecting the need not to exercise control.

He also urged the Bishops to draw ACU's distinctive Mission to the attention of the Church community so that the benefits of being educated at Australian Catholic University could be much better understood.

"The University of the future must build on its existing strengths, know incisively the community and market outreach of the community it serves and illustrate its strengths in teaching, researching and community service," the Vice-Chancellor said. "If Australian Catholic University is realising the Mission effectively, these strengths will earmark a different kind of profile for the University, relative to other tertiary institutions in Australia."